

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
DIA WASHDC
CINCLANT NORFOLK VA
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SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR IN LUANDA OPTIMISTIC

REF: (A) LISBON 6272 (DTG 121456Z AUG 77),
(B) LISBON 5822 (DTG 271731Z JUL 77)

SUMMARY: PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR TO ANGOLA SA COUTINHO IS
OPTIMISTIC REGARDING THE GRADUALLY IMPROVING STATE OF
PORTUGUESE-ANGOLAN RELATIONS. HE BELIEVES THAT THE ISSUE OF
PORTUGUESE CITIZENS STILL JAILED IN ANGOLA WILL BE RESOLVED
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WITHIN TWO WEEKS AND THAT THE REPATRIATION OF MOST ANGOLAN
REFUGEES IN PORTUGAL CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE END OF THE
YEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR SA COUTINHO RETURNED TO LUANDA
AUGUST 23, AFTER MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT EANES AND FOREIGN
MINISTER MEDEIROS FERREIRA ON THE STATUS OF GOP-GOA RELATIONS.

AFTER A TWO-HOUR SESSION WITH EANES AUGUST 22, THE AMBADDADOR
MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

-- PORTUGUESE CITIZENS IN ANGOLAN JAILS: AS A RESULT OF
THE JOINT EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT EANES, MAJOR FONSECA DE
ALMEIDA, FOREIGN MINISTER FERREIRA, AND THE NETO GOVERNMENT,
THE ISSUE OF PORTUGUESE CITIZENS STILL JAILED IN LUANDA WILL
BE RESOLVED "WITHIN 10 TO 15 DAYS." SA COUTINHO DID NOT
SUPPLY THE EXACT NUMBER OF THOSE STILL BEING HELD. HE NOTED
THAT ALTHOUGH PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE HAD NOT BEEN AS RAPID
AS THE GOP HAD HOPED, THE GROUND WORK HAS BEEN CAREFULLY LAID
AND THE ISSUE WILL SOON CEASE TO BE A BONE OF CONTENTION
BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

-- RETURNEES: WITH THE HELP OF THE U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES, SA COUTINHO PREDICTS THAT ALMOST ALL OF THOSE
WHO WANT TO RETURN TO ANGOLA WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO BY THE
END OF THE YEAR. HE EMPHASIZED THAT REPATRIATION WOULD
NOT BE A MASSIVE ONE-SHOT AFFAIR BUT WOULD EVOLVE SLOWLY
TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE GOP, THE GOA, AND THE RETURNEES
THEMSELVES. IN LIGHT OF THE JULY 25 GOP-GOA ACCORD ON THE
REPATRIATION OF ANGOLAN NATIONALS, PORTUGAL WILL DO ALL IT CAN
TO PROMOTE THE RETURNEES' REINTRODUCTION INTO ANGOLAN SOCIETY.

-- BILATERAL RELATIONS: ACCORDING TO THE AMBASSADOR,
GOP-GOA BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE PROGRESSING AT SLOW BUT
STEADY PACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF "MUTUAL SECURITY AND OPTIMISM."

2. COMMENT: PORTUGUESE-ANGOLAN RELATIONS AND THE RESOLUTION
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OF OUTSTANDING BILATERAL ISSUES REMAIN HIGH ON THE GOP PRIORITY
LIST. PRESIDENT EANES CONFERS REGULARLY WITH MAJOR FONSECA
DE ALMEIDA (REF A) AND RECEIVES PERIODIC REPORTS DIRECTLY
FROM SA COUTINHO. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, A TEAM HEADED BY
MATOS PARREIRA, FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF
COOPERATION, IS ALSO ON ITS WAY TO LUANDA.

THE PRISONER ISSUE SEEMS TO BE WELL ON THE WAY TO SOLUTION.
ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THE U.N. IS APPOINTING A REPRESENT-
ATIVE IN LISBON TO HELP DEAL WITH THE REPATRIATION PROBLEM,
THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT A LARGE SCALE EFFORT IS YET IN
THE WORKS.

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